

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Office of Communications (614) 644-8562

ODH Announces New Initiatives to Educate Youth and Parents About Vaping Dangers and to Provide Tools for Quitting

As They Investigate, CDC Now Warns People Against Vaping

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH, today announced new initiatives to prevent and reduce youth vaping. This comes following recent warnings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about severe pulmonary illnesses reported following vaping.

State and local public health officials in Ohio have confirmed that 10 reports of severe pulmonary illness after vaping are likely due to vaping and are investigating an additional 14 reports of illness. Nationally in 33 states, CDC says that it is aware of more than 450 possible cases of severe pulmonary illness after vaping and at least five deaths.

“The explosive increase in vaping among our youth is a public health crisis, and we must educate them and their parents about the dangers of vaping,” said ODH Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH. “Youth have shown an increased vulnerability to nicotine addiction, and evidence suggests that nicotine use during adolescence and young adulthood has long-term impacts on brain development. Last year alone, we saw a 48% increase in vaping among middle schoolers and a 78% increase in vaping among high schoolers. We must provide resources to help our youth to quit using any tobacco products, including vaping.”

ODH announced several new initiatives to address vaping and tobacco use:

- [Letter](#) to Ohio school districts encouraging them, in their school policies, to prohibit the use of vaping products and to warn school administrators, teachers, parents, and students about the dangers of vaping and where to get free help to quit;
- Investment of approximately \$3.3 million to develop and promote a set of tools and resources that can be used by community groups, organizations, and others to help educate youth and community members about the dangers of vaping and actions they can take to curb vaping in their communities. These tools are likely to include a web-based youth vaping prevention education module, parent/caregiver awareness education, public awareness initiatives, and outreach to community stakeholders;
- Investment of approximately \$800,000 in public education campaigns targeting youth and their parents about vaping, as well as Ohio’s new law prohibiting the sale of tobacco, including vaping products, to individuals younger than 21. This new law takes effect on Oct. 17, 2019.

“Tobacco and other companies are addicting our next generation through vaping -- and it is simply not safe. Candy-flavored liquids and intentional marketing tactics are clearly being used to attract and addict young people to vaping,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “That is wrong, and we must continually look for new ways to reduce vaping in Ohio, especially among our kids!”

People should consider not using e-cigarette products while this investigation is ongoing, according to CDC. The agency also says that e-cigarette products should never be used by youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products. People who do use e-cigarette products should monitor

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themselves for symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever) and promptly seek medical attention for any health concerns. Regardless of the ongoing investigation, people who use e-cigarette products should not buy them off the street and should not modify e-cigarette products or add any substances that are not intended by the manufacturer.

CDC says that the lung illnesses are likely associated with a chemical exposure, but it is too early to pinpoint a single product or substance common to all cases. CDC also is aware that some laboratories have identified Vitamin E acetate in product samples and has connected those laboratories with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's forensic laboratories to compare results.

ODH issued a health alert to healthcare providers on August 23, along with a CDC health alert, to ask them to report to local or state public health officials for all suspected cases of serious pulmonary illness where the cause is unclear and there is a history of vaping.

If you need help quitting tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, contact your doctor or go to the ODH website at odh.ohio.gov for information about resources, including the Ohio Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

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NOTE TO NEWS MEDIA – ODH will post any new updates in the investigation on its website [here](#) every Tuesday and Thursday by 2 p.m. A copy of ODH's August 23rd news release announcing that state and local public health officials are investigating reports of severe pulmonary illness following use of e-cigarettes, or vaping, is available [here](#), and follow up news release about confirmed cases and updated CDC recommendations is available [here](#). The latest updates from CDC are available [here](#) and [here](#).